

March 22, 1983

PRESIDENT: On a more joyous note, the Chair would like to announce that today is the birthday of Senator Howard Peterson and his wife and office assistants have cake to pass out for the occasion. We congratulate you on your birthday. Senator DeCamp, what is your point?

SENATOR DeCAMP: Okay, Mr. President, I'm not trying to make trouble but I think we have to establish just what the rules are and what the system is going to be when we impose time limits because if at the end of the time limit we don't vote or we don't have a closing or we don't resolve the issue at least one way or the other, even if we close off debate, then we are setting up a system where on any bill you disagree with, you simply run out the clock. And so I would presume that the time limit implies in it at the end of that time, a vote on the issue of some kind or other, wouldn't it?

PRESIDENT: That was the feeling of the Chair from the standpoint of what we might call common sense, but.....

SENATOR DeCAMP: Then otherwise, the system is hopeless. All I have to do is run out the clock on anything I oppose.

PRESIDENT: The problem the Chair would have, Senator DeCamp, is that if there are others wanting to speak they are precluded by calling a vote, without someone calling the question itself. Senator Lamb, can you add light to this great problem?

SENATOR LAMB: Well, Mr. President and members, this has been a problem that we have had before and it is correct, we do not have anything in our rules which says we take a vote at the end of the time limit and so that is why I have always resisted putting a time limit on anything on the agenda because it does become an object for a filibuster then. Then you can filibuster for the thirty minutes. Under the rules you cannot force a vote and so you have just wasted the thirty minutes. So it does not make good sense under our present rules to put a time limit on anything on the agenda. It just wastes time if the opponents are so inclined. Now there have been times in the past when we have voted at the end of the time limit but that was only because nobody challenged the ruling. So I guess I just submit that we are properly following the rules in this case but it is a waste of time to put time limits on the items on the agenda.

PRESIDENT: The Chair would just observe that if there is a limit on time of debate that perhaps one should consider in the revision of this matter, vote immediately if the time is expired and is determined to be held that way by